

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 L-03 DODE-00 EUR-25 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 MC-02 COME-00 EB-11 TRSE-00

AID-20 OMB-01 SS-20 NSC-10 H-03 SCEM-02 INT-08 DRC-01

(ISO) R

DRAFTED BY AF/W:ARMCKEE:JS

APPROVED BY AF:DDNEWSOM (DRAFT)

AF/W:RKSHERWOOD

F/RA:LTCOL. COYKENDALL (DRAFT)

S/S: MR. GAMMON

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R 220056Z DEC 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

INFO USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 249670

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MASS, NI

SUBJECT: NORTHROP ACTIVITIES/FMG INTEREST IN F-5E AIRCRAFT

REF: STATE 245208

1. ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM MET DECEMBER 19 WITH C. R. GATES, NORTHROP VICE-PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL MARKETING, AND WILLIAM ROTHWELL, NORTHROP REGIONAL MANAGER FOR AFRICA.

2. ROTHWELL INDICATED NORTHROP PROPOSAL TO FMG FOR SALE OF 12 F-5E AND THREE F-5B/F AIRCRAFT BEING PRESENTED IN LAGOS THIS WEEK. ROTHWELL SPECULATED THAT NIGERIAN AIR FORCE (NAF) OFFICERS MIGHT WISH INSPECT AIRCRAFT IN US AS EARLY AS JANUARY 1974. CITING NIGERIAN APPREHENSIONS OVER RELIABILITY OF US AS MILITARY SUPPLIER AND FEELINGS OVER FAILURE TO ARRANGE GOWON-NIXON MEETING, GATES INQUIRED INTO
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POSSIBILITY THAT US COULD ENCOURAGE NIGERIAN CHOICE OF F-5E

BY PROVIDING APPROPRIATE HIGH-LEVEL ASSURANCES TO FMG;
(IN EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH AF OFFICERS, ROTHWELL HAD
URGED HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL GESTURE OF "FRIENDSHIP" TOWARD
NIGERIA).

3. MR. NEWSOM RESPONDED BY ASSURING NORTHROP REPRESENTA-
TIVES OF DEPARTMENT'S SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR THEIR EFFORTS
IN NIGERIA, BUT EXPRESSING CONCERN THAT WE ADEQUATELY CON-
SIDER ALL ASPECTS OF SALE WHICH COULD CONCEIVABLY INCLUDE
CONDITIONS OR OTHERWISE OFFEND NIGERIAN SENSIBILITIES
LATER ON. (FYI) IN PARTICULAR, HE NOTED THAT NIGERIA UN-
LIKELY TO SETTLE FOR F-5E'S NOT EQUIPPED WITH SIDEWINDER
MISSILE WHICH GIVES PLANE ITS PUNCH. HE NOTED THAT SALE OF
SUCH MISSILES COULD NOT BE MADE WITHOUT PRESIDENTIAL DETER-
MINATIONS AND NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS, WHOSE REACTION WE
COULD NOT AT PRESENT ANTICIPATE. EVEN IF WE DID NOT SELL
F-5S WE WANTED TO AVOID SITUATION IN WHICH WE HAD TO TELL
NIGERIANS THEY MIGHT NOT BE ABLE GET SOME EQUIPMENT AS MAT-
TER OF POLICY; THIS WOULD STRIKE VERY SENSITIVE CHORD.
(ROTHWELL INDICATED THAT SIDEWINDER NOT YET MENTIONED IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH NIGERIA.) (END FYI)

4. ROTHWELL SAID NAF EXPRESSED INTEREST IN AVAILABILITY OF
ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURE (ECM) DEVICES FOR F-5. NEWSOM
SAID AVAILABILITY SUCH EQUIPMENT WOULD NEED TO BE EXPLORED,
INCLUDING WHETHER THERE WERE ANY LEGAL LIMITATION ON SALES.
GATES COMMENTED THAT F-5E NOT YET QUALIFIED FOR ECM EQUIP-
MENT AND NO QUALIFICATION PROGRAM PRESENTLY CONTEMPLATED,
THOUGH QUALIFICATION MIGHT BE CONSIDERED EVENTUALLY.

5. MR. NEWSOM SAID THAT, GIVEN UNPREDICTABLE NATURE OF
EVENTS IN AFRICA AND CONGRESSIONAL ACTION, IT WOULD BE
DIFFICULT GIVE FORMAL US ASSURANCES OF AN UNINTERRUPTED
FUTURE SPARE PARTS SUPPLY. THIS COULD, PERHAPS, BE TAKEN
CARE OF IN SAME WAY THROUGH STORAGE IN NIGERIA WHICH WOULD
NOT REQUIRE WRITTEN ASSURANCE. NEWSOM ALSO RAISED QUESTION
OF NIGERIAN AWARENESS OF LIMITATIONS ON TRANSFER OF EQUIP-
MENT TO THIRD COUNTRIES AND SUGGESTED THAT NORTHROP RE-
PRESENTATIVES MAKE THIS POSITION KNOWN TO NIGERIANS INFOR-
MALLY IN FUTURE CONTACTS.

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6. MR. NEWSOM EXPLAINED THAT US RELATIONS WITH NIGERIA
SHAPED BY DEALINGS ON TWO LEVELS. GENERAL GOWON HAS REACTED
TO US ACTIONS WITH UNDERSTANDING, BUT VIEWS OF PRESENT
PERMANENT SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ARE INFLUENCED BY
HIS EXPERIENCES AS AMBASSADOR TO US DURING TROUBLED CIVIL
WAR PERIOD AND MAY NOT ALWAYS BE HELPFUL. HE NOTED THAT WE
WELL RECOGNIZED NIGERIA'S INCREASING IMPORTANCE TO US AS

ENERGY SOURCE, TRADING PARTNER AND INFLUENTIAL LEADER ON AFRICAN CONTINENT. STATE VISIT INVITATION IS OUTSTANDING TO GENERAL GOWON AND SECRETARY KISSINGER WOULD BE URGED TO INCLUDE NIGERIA ON ITINERARY ANY AFRICAN TRIP. HE OBSERVED THAT PARTICULAR FURTHER GESTURES AT THIS TIME DID NOT SEEM APPROPRIATE.

7. MR. NEWSOM SUGGESTED THAT NORTHROP REPRESENTATIVES PLAN TO MEET WITH HIM AGAIN DURING SECOND WEEK IN JANUARY FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF SIDEWINDERS, ECM AND OTHER POSSIBLE PROBLEM ASPECTS OF TRANSACTION.

8. MEETING PRODUCED DISCOVERY THAT NORTHROP PROPOSAL TO NIGERIA INCORRECTLY IMPLIES ONLY "EXPENDABLE MUNITIONS" FOR F-5E WOULD HAVE TO BE PROCURED THROUGH AGREEMENT WITH USG, WHEREAS ALL ORDNANCE ITEMS (INCLUDING GUNS, EJECTION SEAT EJECTORS, ETC.) ARE GOVERNMENT-FURNISHED EQUIPMENT NOT AVAILABLE DIRECTLY FROM NORTHROP.

9. COMMENTS ABOVE DRAFTED BEFORE RECEIPT LAGOS 10169, WHICH RAISES MANY OF SAME QUESTIONS. EMBASSY CONCERNS WILL BE INCORPORATED AMONG ASPECTS CURRENTLY BEING EXAMINED MORE CLOSELY IN ANTICIPATION OF FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH NORTHROP, AND DEPARTMENT WILL PROVIDE REQUESTED CLARIFICATIONS TO EMBASSY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
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